DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 255 CS 213 309

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TITLE A Tale of Two Campuses: The Part-Time English Teacher at Brigham Young University and Utah Valley Community College.
PUB DATE Mar 92
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (43rd, Cincinnati, OH, March 19-21, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College English; Comparative Analysis; Educational Research; Employment Level; *Employment Patterns; Employment Statistics; Higher Education; *Income; *Job Satisfaction; *Part Time Faculty; Teacher Attitudes; Two Year Colleges; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Brigham Young University UT; English Teachers; *Utah Valley Community College

ABSTRACT

A study compared the working conditions of part-time English teachers at Brigham Young University (BYU) and Utah Valley Community College (UVCC). At BYU more than half of the advanced writing classes are taught by part-timers, who make up 27% of the English department, and women part-timers outnumber men four to one. At UVCC there are about as many men as women among the part-time instructors; none receive office space, telephones or computers; and the per-credit wage is approximately two-and-a-half times lower than at BYU. Part-time instructors at both BYU and UVCC have no job security and receive no benefits, yet 40% (BYU) and 75% (UVCC) are the primary wage-earners in their homes. The comparison of BYU and UVCC reflect nationwide differences between part-timers at four-year and two-year institutions. Part-time instructors were surveyed concerning their job satisfaction. Results indicated that: (1) about 70% of BYU and UVCC respondents felt they were not adequately compensated; (2) 71% of BYU and 46% of UVCC respondents felt they were not respected and valued by the administration; (3) 74% of BYU and 54% of UVCC respondents did not feel administration policies on hiring, benefits and advancement were equitable; (4) 81% of BYU and 86% of UVCC respondents felt they were respected and valued by their departments; and (5) 78% of BYU and 50% of UVCC respondents felt that part-time faculty were exploited by the university/community college. (Six tables of data are included.) (RS)

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A Tale of Two Campuses: The Part-time English Teacher at Brigham Young University and Utah Valley Community College.

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Almost a mile high, nestled in the Wasatch Front of the Rocky mountains, sits the winner of Money magazine's 1991 annual survey of the Best Places to Live Now: Provo/Orem, "where the living is easy, taxes are moderate and the economic engine is running on all cylinders" (Money 130). With a population of two hundred and sixty three thousand, six hundred, the sister cities enjoy 232 sunny days a year, "the greatest snow on earth," low crime, low unemployment, and the highest local job growth rate in the country (Money 130). With world-class skiing only minutes away, a 94% high school graduation rate, and over 80 software companies, including Novell and WordPerfect, Provo/Orem is truly a "demi-paradise" (Henry ?). Why am I telling you this? Do I want you to be among the 200 newcomers per month who wish to live in the #1 cities? No, I'm not a secret member of the Chamber of Commerce. But the Provo/Orem area is home to two institutions of higher education - Brigham Young University and Utah Valley Community College. I felt that a study and a comparison of the two might prove interesting.

In collecting data for this talk, I received valuable assistance from the Office of Institutional Studies at Brigham Young University, the Office of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning at Utah Valley Community College, and my friends and colleagues at both institutions. My thanks to all of them.

With over 26,000 students, Brigham Young University is among the largest church schools in the world. Founded, supported and guided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - the Mormons - its motto is "Enter to learn, go forth to serve." BYU offers Associate degrees in two areas, and Bachelors' degrees in 93 areas; 55 departments award Masters' degrees, and 24 award Doctoral degrees.

Tuition is on two levels. An LDS student - from anywhere in the world - pays $1000 per semester for a full-time load, defined as 8 credit hours. A part-time student pays $102 per credit hour. The non-LDS student pays half as much again - $1500 full-time and $153 per credit hour part-time.

Utah Valley Community College is a two-year college, with a strong vocational emphasis. Much smaller than BYU, with around 8000 students, UVCC offers an Associate of Arts and an Associate of Science. Their third Associate degree, an Associate of Applied Science, is described as a "job-ready" degree. In addition, non-degree students can receive a diploma or Certificate of Completion. An in-state student pays $436 for eight credit hours; the equivalent out-of-state cost is $1162.

Obviously, the two establishments cater to different needs. But many students begin their post-secondary education at UVCC, and then move on to BYU.

Naturally, where there are students, there is writing, and naturally again, much of the writing instruction is in the

hands of graduate students and part-timers. So let's look now at who takes writing classes, and who teaches them.

At BYU, all 26,000 students are required to take three credit hours of Freshman English, and three credit hours of Advanced Writing before they are awarded their Bachelor's degrees. (The Associate degree requires only the three freshman hours.) Last semester, 2049 students took Freshman English, and another 1465 were enrolled in the Advanced Writing classes, which are separated according to majors. These 3514 students were in 101 sections, for an average of 35 students per class. 90% of Freshman English was taught by graduate students, nearly 6% by part-timers, and the remainder by full-time faculty. More than half of the Advanced Writing classes were taught by part-timers, with the remainder divided almost equally between full-timers and graduate students. While the University as a whole has 3.7 full-time faculty members for each part-timer, the English department has 2.7 full-timers for each part-timer. On a head-count basis, part-timers make up 27% of the English department. Of course, if we count graduate students who teach writing as part-timers in the sense that they are not full-timers, the percentage goes up to 56%.

At UVCC, students working for an Associate degree take 10 hours of reading and writing credit. The "job-ready" Associate of Applied Science requires only three hours, and the diploma and certificate of completion have no English requirement.

These courses are taught by 4 full-time faculty, and 37 part-timers; with 0.11 full-timers per part-timer, part-timers make up 90% of the department.

Clearly, part-timing is alive and kicking in the Provo-Orem area! So who are these people? Why do they do what they do? And how do they feel about it?

Among BYU part-time composition teachers, women outnumber men by nearly 4 to 1. Only one person considers part-time teaching a "second job," and 40% are the primary wage-earners in their homes. We receive no benefits - no medical, dental or life insurance, no savings, no retirement benefits, and no tuition waivers. Almost all of us have Master's degrees; one has a PhD. A beginning part-timer earns less per credit hour than a beginning graduate student instructor; an experienced part-timer may earn up to $50 more per credit hour than an experienced MA student. Our credit hour rate comes to slightly more than one fourth of the credit hour rate for a beginning assistant professor on tenure track - if you count only the cash earned by the assistant professor, without any benefits.

We do have the same library privileges as full-time faculty in the English department, and we do have the full support of an excellent and much appreciated steno pool. Although we have to share offices (sometimes as many as four of us per office), we do have phones with message-taking capabilities, and computers. The department administrati.. makes a real effort to give us our class assignments as early

as possible (for example, we have already received our assignments for Fall), and to get our names in the class schedule and the university phone book. The department is even offering a professional development seminar this summer, specifically for part-timers - a very welcome first.

But the university administration continues to marginalize us. In addition to the very real hardship caused by lack of financial benefits and a fair proportionate wage, we have to cope with problems such as no job security from one semester to the next, having to pay a deposit for our office keys (until recently we were trusted with free keys, as full-timers are, but not any longer), and parking permits which allow us to share a remote lot with the graduate students - although again the department has mediated on our behalf, and part-time faculty in the English department can now receive a permit for two designated lots of our choice.

Clearly, we are not high on the pecking order at BYU. But how are things down at the community college?

At UVCC, numbers of men and women are more evenly divided, almost half and half. Again, for the majority, part-time teaching is the primary or only job, and 3 out of 4 part-timers are the primary wage earners in their homes - a higher proportion than at BYU. Those who teach the lowest level courses are not required to hold a Master's degree - in other words, some of them are "only" as well qualified as our graduate student instructors. But part-time faculty who teach

courses for which credit can be transferred to a university must hold at least a Master's. Again, there are no benefits, and, according to one 'freeway flier,' the per credit-hour wage is approximately two and a half times lower than at the University.

Library privileges, though less than those granted by BYU, are again equivalent to the full-time privileges. But part-timers at UVCC have no offices - they share carrels in a hallway - no phones, no computers. Class assignments are often made (and changed) at the last minute. Like those of us at the university, the UVCC part-timer has no job security - but at least in terms of parking they have the same rights as the full-time faculty - and the students. All parking on the UVCC campus is open to anyone who has paid $20 for a yearly permit.

So there we are. At the top of the totem pole are the full-time university faculty - with secure jobs, a decent living wage, and benefits. Next, a fair way down, come the University part-timers - a certain amount of confidence in the department, but no real job security; a fraction of a full-time wage much lower than the fraction of a full-time load that we teach; and a few small benefits, none of which seriously costs the university administration anything. Only a little further down come the graduate student instructors - after our wages have had social security taxes deducted and the grad students' haven't, some of them are better off than we are; but I suppose we do get to check books out of the

library for four months to their two, and we can park slightly closer to our buildings than they can. And right at the very bottom come the UVCC part-timers. No job security, a pitiful rate of pay, and virtually no benefits.

Do these differences in status reflect nationwide differences between part-timers at four-year and two-year institutions? In terms of proportion of Part-time to full-time faculty, the Conference on College Communication and Composition estimates that "[m]ore than half the English faculty in two-year colleges, and nearly one third of the English faculty at four-year colleges and universities, work on part-time and/or temporary appointments" (330). Our study found this to be an accurate reflection of the proportion at BYU, but a significant underestimate of the proportion of part-timers at UVCC.

Much research shows a pattern on salary and financial benefits similar to that found in this study - university part-timers earn more than their counterparts at two-year institutions, but less than their full-time colleagues, and although the number of institutions offering benefits on a <u>pro rata</u> basis is increasing, many still lag behind in this respect. As Helen Parramore Twigg puts it, "[t]he lack of operating funds in an essential industry is made up by disenfranchising and impoverishing half or more of the absolutely essential skilled workers" (5).

Nationwide, too, part-timers are frequently without the ordinary comforts of daily life as it is lived in the full-time world. Many institutions still do not reach the standards set by the CCCC's "Statement of Principles and Standards", which include ". . .access to research support and travel funds. . ." (334), and practical support such as mailboxes, telephones, and clerical help. Some four-year institutions seem to be moving towards meeting the standards, others do not; and again, two-year colleges are trailing. Writing in Teaching English in the Two-Year College, Merle O'Rourke Thompson wishes for "a desk of my own. . .a place to stash my books between classes. . .a private place in which I can meet students" (199). Nationwide, it seems, part-timers at two-year colleges end up at the bottom of the pecking order, with university part-timers not far above them.

With the very real differences in our professional "standard of living," I would expect there to be a noticeable difference in level of job satisfaction. My colleague, Penny, will give a comparison of full- and part-time levels of satisfaction at BYU - I will summarize the results obtained by surveying the part-time faculty at BYU and UVCC.

We asked whether respondents felt that they were adequately compensated for their teaching services. Remember that the BYU part-timer gets between a third and a fourth of the full-time rate, but two and a half times the rate at UVCC.

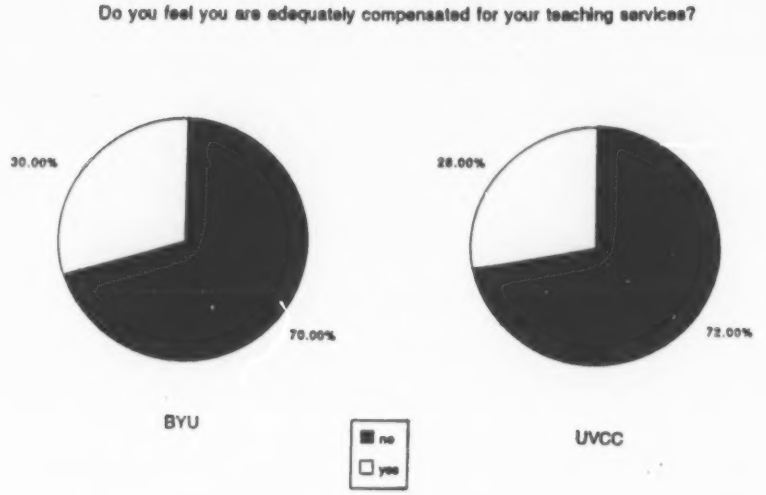

Table 1

72% at UVVC felt they were not adequately compensated, and 70% at BYU agreed - not a significant difference given the difference in rate of pay.

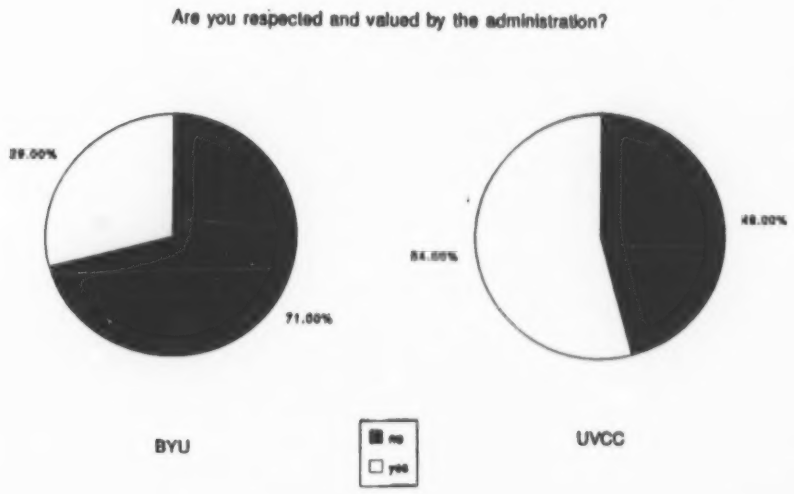

Table 2

71% of BYU respondents and 46% from UVCC felt they were not respected and valued by the administration, 74% from BYU and 54% from UVCC did not feel administration policies on hiring, benefits and advancement were equitable.

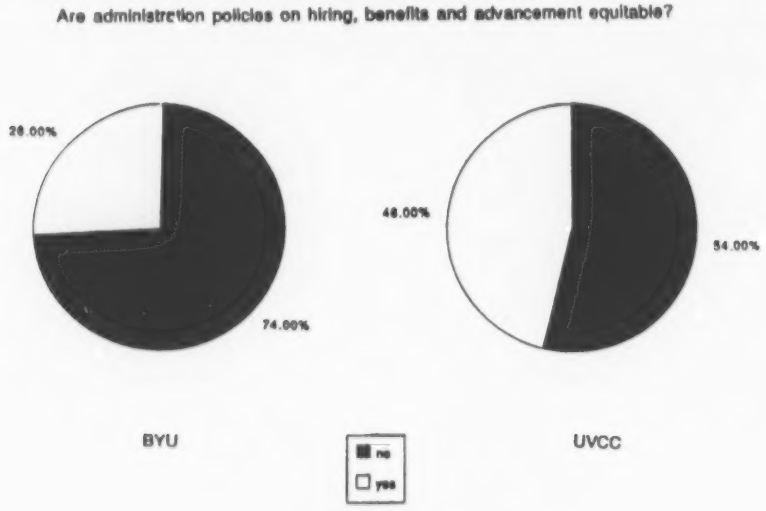

Table 3

The departments fared better. At BYU only 25% felt that departmental policies were unfair, and 81% felt respected and valued by the department. Not surprising, since 100% agree that part-timers contribute significantly to the mission of the department!

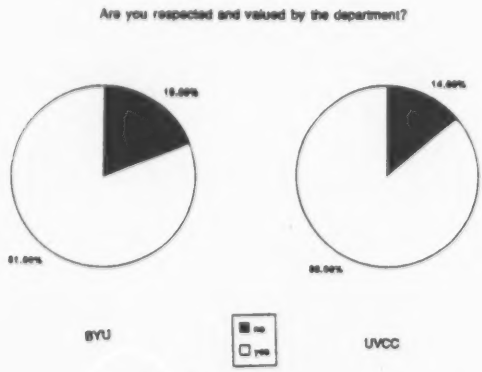

Table 4

Our part-time colleagues at UVCC were not strong in their feelings about departmental policy - 73% registered no opinion on the matter - but 86% felt that the department valued them, and 96% felt they contributed significantly to the department. Maybe their lack of opinion on department policy reflects a lack of information - further evidence of part-timers "not really belonging."

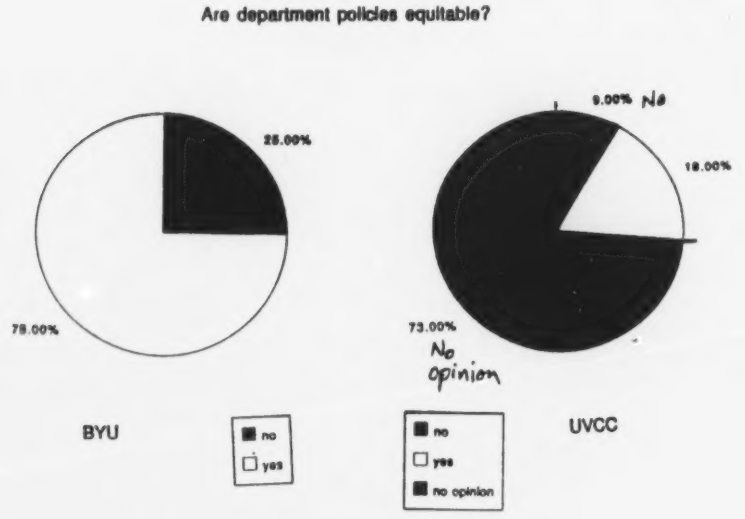

Table 5

82% at BYU and 71% at UVCC thought that part-timers should be eligible to receive benefits from the departments and from the administration, on a prorated basis. And despite the real disparity between part-timers at the university and at the two-year college, the university part-timers expressed a considerably stronger sense that they were exploited by the institution - 78% to only 50% at UVCC.

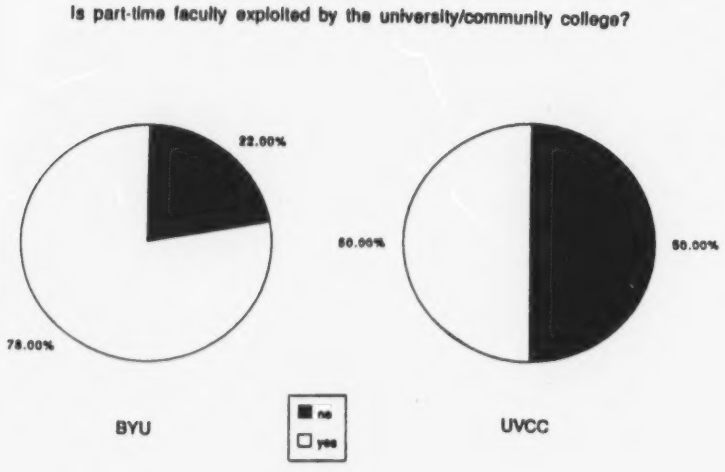

Table 6

The most striking feature of this survey - to me at any rate - was the marked similarity of responses. It seems that none of us is satisfied with our lot - maybe there is a touch in each of us of the old woman in the vinegar bottle, always wishing for more and better than we have!

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